

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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### BROWNIE'S PLOT.

A SERIAL STORY.

*By the Author of "Lucy Carter."*

#### CHAPTER I. THE NORTHCOTTS.

A JOURNEY of something less than two hours will bring you from the hurry and bustle of London to the placid calm of Middleton.

Middleton is a town of thirty thousand souls, more or less; rejoicing in a Mayor and Corporation, the half of a Member of Parliament, and other advantages too numerous and commonplace to mention. Not the least valuable of these is a long stretch of down, rising like a bulwark to protect it from the north-east winds. A few houses are scattered along its slope to leeward, the most pretentious being Eastwood, the abode of Mr. and Mrs. Northcott.

Ramour said that the first Mr. Northcott known to history had been in very humble circumstances. Ramour, however, is not always to be trusted; and no matter how Mr. Northcott began his life, he undoubtedly became the possessor of vast wealth before its conclusion. He was succeeded by his son, the present owner of the name, and of a still more valuable property: "the High Wood Brick and Tile Works."

The house could be seen from miles around, because of the high observatory which rose from one side of it; but was entirely hidden from the road immediately before its wide gates, by a thick screen of young limes. The garden sloped down towards the High Street, from which it was separated only by a few hundred yards.

One afternoon, towards the end of May, Mrs. Northcott and two girls were seated in the drawing-room. Every line of her handsome, but faded, face expressed anxiety; for Mrs. Northcott was given to create troubles as often as opportunity offered.

"You must allow, Maud, that Dr. Stanhope could not have chosen a more inconvenient time to be taken ill. He has attended your father these twenty years; and now, when he might really be of some use, he is unable to leave his room."

"I suppose it is hardly his fault, auntie," said the darker of the two girls.

This was Margaret Northcott, whose pet name was Brownie. She was not, in truth, Mrs. Northcott's niece, her father having been Mr. Northcott's first cousin; but, as she was a year younger than Maud, it had seemed fit, when she came to live at Eastwood upon her father's death, to adopt this more respectful and avuncular form of address.

Brownie exactly described her. Her hair only just escaped blackness; her complexion was that of a brunette; her eyes were hazel; whilst her forehead was so much hidden as not to need taking into account. Not that her intellectual faculties were, from a phrenological point of view, too little developed, but her thick brown hair grew unusually low down, and was so unruly as to refuse to be persuaded backwards upon any terms whatever.

Brownie's dark complexion appeared the darker by the side of her cousin Maud's, whose fair hair seemed to harmonise with her white, clear skin, which, together with a certain stateliness of manner, gave her the classical beauty of a statue.

Maud was distinguished by a somewhat severe simplicity, whilst Brownie betrayed a

tendency to, as it were, dress up to her name. Her horse was a chestnut; she wore a brown habit; so that Clement, Maud Northcott's half-brother—for he was the son of Mr. Northcott by his first wife—had described her as a "study in brown." Moreover, she was the only kind of study for which Clement showed no distaste.

"You don't think that Dr. Stanhope is malingering, mother?"

"When you have done trifling, Maud, perhaps you will listen to me," answered Mrs. Northcott, with dignity.

"I thought the topic was exhausted," said Maud, trying to dissemble a yawn.

"We cannot have Dr. Stanhope; we must find some one else."

"But who is the some one to be? You can hardly expect me to call in that young man to try experiments on your poor father. If Clement were more like other sons, the responsibility would not fall so heavily upon me. At a crisis like this, I maintain he ought to be at home."

"Everybody says Mr. Anderson is clever," suggested Brownie; "he set Uncle Walter's arm very carefully. And if Dr. Stanhope had not confidence in him, he would never allow him to take his patients."

This hint was sufficient to start Mrs. Northcott on a fresh tack.

"Ah, there is another misfortune. But nobody ever knew my brother anything but unfortunate yet. To think he should break an arm the very day after his arrival. Of course, it must be the right arm. This is what I want to know. Your uncle has broken his arm three times. Now, can you tell me why it should always have been the same one? The horse is a quiet horse, too."

"Quieter than the rider!" said Brownie, sotto voce.

"I know where that comes from," exclaimed Mrs. Northcott, whose ears were of the keenest. "That is a piece of Clement's impertinence. Far more to his credit if he were to look after himself, instead of making offensive remarks about his elders! Nobody knows the anxiety that boy causes his father. And now, when his opinion might be of some use, of course he is not to be found."

"But surely there can't be any harm in his running up to London, mother. I only wish we might do the same."

Mr. Northcott indulged the girls in every way at Middleton, but would never hear of their spending a season in London. He

was a man of peculiar prejudices. Clement hunted four days a week, and no objection was offered; but once let him put in an appearance at the Hunt Steeplechases, and he would have sinned past forgiveness. After Bunyan, Shakespeare was Mr. Northcott's favourite author; he loved to quote from the plays in and out of season; yet he had never entered a theatre. The presence of a pack of cards in his house would have frightened him out of it.

"You know, as well as I do, how obstinate your dear father is about some things," sighed Mrs. Northcott. "I have nothing to say against your going to London. London, indeed! Do you know what to-day is, Maud?" and, to judge from her tone, it might have been, at least, the Day of Judgement.

"Wednesday, isn't it, Brownie?"

"But what Wednesday?" demanded her mother.

"The last Wednesday in May."

"It is the Derby day, as they call it. And at the Derby you would find Clement at this moment. And his father lying ill all the time; his objection to such scenes so well known, too! Mark my words, that boy will bring disgrace upon us yet. I could tell you things which would astonish you both. It is hardly twelve months since his father paid every one of his debts, and now he is over head and ears again."

"Are you quite sure?" asked Maud; whilst Brownie walked to the window, where she remained, staring blankly out at the garden.

"I have had my suspicions a long time," continued Mrs. Northcott, "and now I am certain. He leaves his things about just as though they were something to be proud of. Such a pile of bills I could show; and show them to his father I must. How can that boy pay them, short of money as he always is? Hundreds of pounds they come to; and all in one year! I call it disgraceful! Tailors' bills, saddlers', wine-merchants', jewellers'. Now, Margaret, you always pretend to take other persons' parts, what can a young man of four-and-twenty want with an account at a jeweller's?"

"At a jeweller's, auntie!" exclaimed Brownie, suddenly facing about.

"Pray do not repeat—yes, at a jeweller's. It all comes very hard upon me. And how am I to know that your poor uncle's arm is properly set? Yet you expect me to call in the same young man who bungled

it to try all kinds of new drugs on your father! For what we know, he may not even be respectable."

"We should hardly have met him at the Rectory, if he had not been respectable," said Maud. "Mr. Butterworth told me he had been dreadfully disappointed about his practice. There was hardly a patient to come to him, except those from the parish. Mr. Butterworth says that Mr. Anderson is an oculist."

An hour or two later Mr. Anderson was there in person. His tightly buttoned frock-coat made his spare frame the more noticeable, and lent a formality to his appearance which scarcely belonged to his character.

He stood six feet in his boots; his long face was cleanly shaven, with the exception of an inch below each ear; his complexion slightly sallow; his most striking characteristic his exceeding leanness; and it was easy to imagine those long white fingers capable of any wonders with the knife.

Having satisfied Mrs. Northcott (or the reverse) concerning every minute detail of her husband's indisposition, he was on the point of taking his leave, when he stopped on the threshold of the drawing-room.

"By-the-bye, as I am here, I may as well see my other patient."

"Ah," began Mrs. Northcott, "you can't imagine anything like my poor brother's helplessness; what with the butler to dress him, and Maud to cut up his food! Margaret, show Mr. Anderson the way to the study."

"It is too bad to trouble you," he said, as he followed her lead. "I think I could have found my way alone."

"How extremely ungrateful!" she laughed. "Do you mean to imply that books have a natural attraction for you, Mr. Anderson?"

"Well, perhaps tobacco has. The way to reach Mr. Litton is to follow your nose, and keep straight on."

Nobody ever dreamed of studying in this study of Mr. Northcott's; and, but for his enforced absence, no one would have dared to smoke there. The book-cases, chairs, writing-tables, and wainscot were all of unstained oak; the books, for the most part, as heavy as lead. Those for actual use and enjoyment came once a week in a box from London.

As Anderson entered the room he heard a drawer sharply closed and a heavy

volume as quickly opened. Mr. Litton, with his right arm in an unwieldy leather sling, rose slowly, as though he left his book with the most profound regret.

"Didn't hear you at first," he said, bringing his left hand down heartily to Anderson's. "Deep in a book, you see; only way to kill time. By the way, have you seen the boss? I guess I'll be healed before he is, eh?"

Mr. Walter Litton was below the average height, and inclined to be stout. His clothes hung about him loosely, and he had a habit of thrusting his hands in the top of his trousers, which never came quite up to the bottom of his waistcoat. His hair was as black as Anderson's, only much thicker and longer. A pair of somewhat thick lips protruded beneath a short moustache; his teeth were remarkably small and even, but as black as coal. There was an oiliness about his face which seemed to suit his exuberance of manner, and it was unpleasant to touch his hand.

"I am not at all sure about that," said Anderson. "What is it that interests you so deeply?"

"It's—about—er—something in Greek," was the embarrassed answer.

"You are fond of the classics?" said Anderson, raising his eyebrows. He leaned forward to look at the open page and added with a laugh: "You are out of it this time; this is a volume of Schiller's plays."

Anderson's laugh was nothing to Mr. Litton's.

"They say you should never disguise anything from your lawyer or your doctor," he roared. "Deuced good reason; they know it's no use trying, eh? No; what little Greek I had is as dead as the language. As for German—give me French. When I heard the door open, I thought it was one of the girls. Girls are such prigs; show them a French novel and away they run like a shot—to the nearest library, eh, Anderson? Well, when am I to get these confounded splints off?"

"With your unfortunate experience, I suppose you know it won't be just yet, as well as I do," was the answer.

"Perhaps I do. Yes, it's my third turn of it. The first time I fell from a pear-tree. Only a boy, then. Next time I tumbled down a mine in Nevada. A close shave, that. What do you call it? Comminuted compound smash, eh? Laid me by the

heels best part of a year. That was ten years ago now, just after I had got back from my last visit to England."

"You do not come home very often, then?"

"This is only the second time in twenty years. Quite often enough. I don't believe in making myself too cheap. If it had not been for this, I should have been at Epsom. Why aren't you there, Doctor? My young scamp of a nephew has gone, you bet. A nice row if the boss heard of it. Pretty swift, my nephew, isn't he?"

"He seems to enjoy his life," Anderson admitted.

"He has knocked up a nice little reputation for himself."

"I dare say. It is not difficult to manage that in Middleton."

"They say he is going to the devil, and from what I can see, he's going on horse-back," said Mr. Litton, and Anderson left him to pursue his studies in whatever language he might prefer.

#### CHAPTER II. CLEMENT NORTHCOTT.

ASSOCIATED for a long time with Mr. Northcott in the management of the brick works, had been Mr. Grayson, who, during recent years, had become his partner. Mr. Grayson's son was ten years older than Clement, and the two fathers often laid their heads together, looking forward to the time when the boys might reign in their stead. Mr. Grayson had gone over to the majority two years ago; his son Henry becoming, from that time, Mr. Northcott's partner and right-hand man.

A yet closer connection had more than once been hinted at, for, devoted as Henry Grayson was to business, he yet found time to bestow many thoughts upon Brownie; and, although he had spoken no word of his love and hopes, Mr. Northcott had encouraged them, and she, at least, had not repelled his advances.

So Mr. Grayson's expectations had been more than realised, whilst Mr. Northcott's promised nothing but disappointment. Clement was supposed to enter a daily appearance at the Works; but this was a very wild supposition indeed. When he felt inclined—which was seldom—he would drive to High Wood for an hour. When he felt disinclined—which was often—he stayed away. Not that he had any objection to the Works in particular: he disliked work in general; whilst it is possible that Henry

Grayson preferred his room to his erratic company.

Clement Northcott was passing rich on two hundred pounds a year, which sum he had inherited—his sister and Brownie being equally fortunate—at the death of the first Mr. Northcott before-mentioned.

It was surprising to observe how much he did with this modest income. If he had chosen to put his shoulder to the wheel in earnest, he might have increased it tenfold; but Mr. Northcott went upon the principle of "no work no pay," and, accordingly did not make his son a regular allowance. He might just as well have done so, for, twice already, he had found it necessary to pay Clement's debts.

These occasions were both vividly remembered. Mr. Northcott had gnashed his teeth; Mrs. Northcott had wept; Clement and every one else had passed a sufficiently-bad quarter of an hour.

Although he had the run of his father's stables, Clement loved a speculation on horseflesh on his own account. He prided himself not a little upon his knowledge of the noble animal, whose friends are often not so noble.

Clement was a member of a little club in London, where play sometimes ran high. He had no particular love for play; but used to take the lead at Middleton; and when he went to Rome he wished to act like the other young Romans.

"Surely a fellow may do as he likes with his own!" he would soliloquise à propos of his two hundred pounds a year.

The best of men have their detractors, and, without being one of the best of men, Clement Northcott had his. In his presence it was difficult to feel anything but satisfaction. He carried his faults in a manner so *débonnaire* that they seemed to be virtues, and to become him exceedingly. His hearty grip of the hand, his gay laugh, his bright face, were as exhilarating as a glass of champagne; but the exhilaration was often followed by reaction; greybeards would shake their old heads solemnly and prophesy dismally concerning his future.

"I do wish Clement would not whistle directly he enters the house," exclaimed Mrs. Northcott, on the afternoon following Anderson's first visit. "His poor father trying to sleep, too!"

The door was flung unceremoniously open, and Clement entered the room. An inch or two shorter than Anderson, he would have scaled a stone heavier. In



perfect condition, an adept at every manly sport, he presented that thoroughbred appearance which we expect in healthy young Englishmen who have nothing to do—or, at any rate, who do nothing—but amuse themselves. Nearly as fair as Maud, his face was tanned until it almost matched his small moustache. His manner was too careless and unstudied for that of a fop; yet Clement was very well dressed, albeit his taste ran in favour of large patterns, and strange and fearful mixtures of red, yellow, and green.

"Well, mother; well, girls. What's the best news?" he said, making straight for Mrs. Northcott's chair.

"The usual Middleton budget, Clem," replied Maud.

"Too exciting to be heard all at once, then? I suppose the pater's all right?"

"Your father is extremely unwell," said Mrs. Northcott, with great solemnity, "very unwell, indeed; and, to add to my troubles, Dr. Stanhope is unable to attend him."

"Poor old governor! Can I go up and see him? By-the-bye, why don't you have the fellow I fetched to Uncle Wal?"

"I never could feel the least confidence in a medical man after hearing him called a fellow, Clement!" cried Mrs. Northcott.

"Oh, well," said Clement, who was nothing if not accommodating, "say chap, man, gentleman—anything you like, mother."

"Mr. Anderson has been called in——" began Maud.

"No, Maud, I consider he has been thrust in," expostulated her mother.

"Well," said Clement, "I'm off to see the pater. Oh—I forgot—how is Uncle Wal? I'll look him up on my way downstairs."

After a short absence, Clement returned to find Brownie and Maud alone.

"I say, the governor does look seedy, doesn't he? Where has Uncle Wal got to? He isn't in his room."

"You will find him in the study," said Brownie.

"What a wretched nuisance! Can't one of you girls go and rout him out?"

"You don't mean to insinuate that you have a desire to study, Clem?" was Maud's demure answer.

"You girls are very well in your way," he retorted, "only just now you are in my way, too. A fellow must be alone sometimes."

Words scarcely noticed at the time, but

destined, for all their unimportance, to be bitterly remembered afterwards, when one of his hearers, at least, had no doubt as to his reason for wishing to be alone.

"Brownie," repeated Clement, "go and rout him out, there's a good girl."

Without a murmur she went to do his bidding; but Maud remained to expostulate.

"You might just as well stay and sit with us, Clem."

"All right, Maud, I shan't be long. It is really important; honour bright. I am going in for a kind of audit, you know."

Brownie's reappearance hindered Maud from retorting.

"Uncle Walter says he is not well now; he is going to bed."

"The devil was ill, the devil a monk would be," exclaimed Clement. "Brownie, you're a brick. A couple of hours, and I shall be ready for anything you like—from thought-reading; to puss-in-the-corner."

"Very well," said Brownie. "Then to find out all about this industrious spirit which has possessed you—whether it be of Heaven or——"

But if her sentence had an end, it was lost in Clement's laugh.

The next morning—it was the last Friday in May—Mr. Litton appeared at the breakfast-table in the best of spirits, despite his indisposition of the previous night and his lame arm.

The room opened on to the garden, where you could see the rhododendrons already in flower, and enjoy the scent of the blossoming May. Clement's St. Bernard lay on the hearthrug, eagerly watching his master's hand on its journeys to his mouth. Clement himself was gorgeous in a plaid dressing-suit, elaborately braided and befrogged.

Brownie, in her white cotton frock, looked as fresh and pure as the flowers which she had just plucked, and which still held the dew-drops on their petals; whilst Maud's pink dress seemed to be designed expressly to make a fair girl more fair.

"Of course you are going to the Works this morning, Clement," said Mrs. Northcott.

"What, and the pater so seedy!" he exclaimed; whereupon there was a general laugh—nobody as yet experiencing the least anxiety about Mr. Northcott's condition. "No," continued Clement, "I must wait to see Anderson."

"What are you going to do then?" enquired Maud.

"In the first place," he answered, as he rose, "Uncle Wal and I are going in the garden for a cigarette. Here, you poor cripple, let me give you an arm."

"You must give me a light, too, my boy. I feel as helpless as a two weeks' infant. Call that brute away from my legs, will you?"

Mr. Litton was not a favourite with Lion.

"That cigarette will take at least an hour, Brownie," said Maud, when the two girls were alone, "afterwards we will insist upon tennis, and accept no excuses."

"All right. I shall just have time to finish this book. I ought to let Henry have it back to-day."

"How is it we have seen so little of Henry Grayson lately, Brownie?"

"Why do you ask me?" she enquired, ingenuously. "I am sure I don't know."

"He has not been here for a fortnight. Not since that evening at the Rectory—the night we first met Mr. Anderson."

Brownie applied herself to the book, without answering; but no sooner had Maud left the room, than the volume was allowed to rest face downwards upon her knees. For she knew well enough that she had accepted from Anderson, on this occasion, attentions which Grayson had come to regard as his prerogative. Without sufficient reason, doubtless, he had come so to regard them. It could hardly be said that Brownie had given Henry undue encouragement. A light-hearted, impulsive girl, without, until this time, many serious thoughts upon any subject whatever, she loved to amuse herself in her own way; and, to any one less painfully in earnest than Grayson, it was not likely to prove a very dangerous way.

"What's the matter, Brownie?" exclaimed Clement, suddenly disturbing the current of her thoughts.

"I thought you were still in the garden," she said, with a start.

"I thought you were a thousand miles away," he retorted. "No, I have just left Uncle Wal in the study. Maud said something about tennis; I'll go and get into my flannels."

But, before the accomplishment of this important transformation, Mr. Anderson was announced; and, slipping on his white jacket, Clement hastened down to speak to him.

## DOMESDAY BOOK.

Two years ago was the eight hundredth anniversary of the completion of the Domesday survey; and the Royal Historical Society improved the occasion by holding a conference, to which almost every English archaeological society sent up its delegates. Delegates came also from the States, and from Canada and Australia; and the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries—mindful that the Normans were by origin Northmen—sent one of its foremost members; while M. Delisle, Director of the Paris National Library, a veteran student of Domesday, gave a new Norman charter.

Indeed, everybody helped, except the Norman Antiquarian Societies, jealous, perhaps, that the Conference was not held at Caen or Falaise, instead of in London. Hence resulted a great exhibition of records, for there are several local Domesdays—the splendid "Exeter Book," written in much the same neat Italian hand as Domesday itself; the "Inquest of Cambridge," which is probably the only surviving original return of the "jurators," or sworn surveyors, appointed for every county; the Cottonian MS., for Kent, a small handy roll meant for the pocket; the Arundel MS., for twenty-four counties, which belonged to Margam Abbey, in Glamorgan; the "Breviate"—a twelfth century MS.—with its fly-leaves covered with Welsh prophecies and myths about Merlin, and lists of the burial-places of saints:

Ore parlerat cast escrit  
Des seyns ou sunt enseveliz  
En Engleterre par parties.

This, too, must have belonged to a Welsh Abbey; while the other abridgement, the "Abbreviatio": compiled early in Edward the First's reign, written not in an Italian, but a native hand, and with illuminated capitals—a bit of extravagance not indulged in in any of the others—and heads or half-length portraits on gold ground of the chief tenants, and adorned on its fly-leaves with six pictures of Edward the Confessor's life, which are said to be as early as Henry the First's time; seems from these illustrations to have belonged to Westminster Abbey.

It is curious—as Mr. Hyde Clarke pointed out in one of the lectures given during the Conference in the Hall of Lincoln's Inn—that for a parallel to Domesday we must go to countries under Turkish

rule. Here, every headman of a village knows all such particulars as are given in our Domesday, and the records—indispensable as a basis for taxation—are kept in the capitals of districts.

Such a register is called a "defter," and "defterdar" is the officer of an administrative division.

Professor Vambéry quotes such a survey of Hungary, made during the old Turkish occupation, which gives particulars of every peasant's land—its quality as well as its quantity—and even of the fruit trees and of the "honey trees" in the forests.

In Turkey, as with us in Domesday, the holdings correspond to the ploughs—land, it itself, was almost valueless. There, too, till the destructive reforms of Sultan Mahmoud, the Feudal Barons had their counterparts in the "timariots," holders of "timars" (fiefs), which they divided among their relations, who formed the military class. Such a survey gave the King a list of men responsible for the defence of the country, while it prevented the tenants from encroaching on one another. Indeed, our Book is full of "clamores," that is, complaints of the wronged, and "invasiones," or notes of somebody's intrusion into another's domain.

There had been earlier surveys. The Doom-books of Ælfred and Æthelstan, etc., were books of judgements; but three years ago there was discovered, on the fly-leaf of an Ælfrie's Latin Grammar, a tenth century list of names and acreage—Myrcna (Mercia), thirty thousand hides; Cantwarena (Kent) fifteen thousand; West Saxena, ten thousand, etc.—possibly based on that survey made by "Dyval, son of Clydno, who measured all Great Britain before the Crown of London and the Lordship of this island were seized by the Saxons." Our survey leaves out the four northern counties; for Durham and Northumberland had been so cruelly wasted after the murder of Bishop Walcher that there could have been little of value to put down. Of Cumberland and Westmoreland the southern parts were reckoned in Yorkshire; for the northern, belonging to the British kingdom of Strathclyde, the Scotch Kings did homage till William Rufus joined them to England, transplanting to Carlisle many of those whose homes were destroyed in making the New Forest. Lancashire, too, had not yet been formed into a county. The Book surveys Salfordshire and Blackburnshire as part of Cheshire; Furness and Amounderness

belonged to the West Riding. Rutland has no existence in the Book; half of it is surveyed under Lincoln, the other half under Northampton. The first thing to note is the terrible falling off in population, and therefore in tillage, since the good days of the Confessor (marked T. E. R. in the Book, tempore regis Edwardi). In the parish of Pickering the ploughed land had gone down from seventy-four thousand acres to twelve hundred. In Knapton, near York, under Edward, eleven hundred acres were tilled. When the survey was made all was desolate, seemingly without a single inhabitant. We must not think that all the tilled land was enclosed. In Pickering all but four hundred acres were tilled in common fields; in Knapton only twenty acres were enclosed. Rent was usually paid in kind or in services, the farmer being he who supplied "feorm," food and entertainment to the lord when he visited the manor. When there was no other payment, the "scat penny," as it was called, varied from a penny to fourpence an acre. The common land being tilled in strips or balks, the produce of every tenth strip went to the priest. Till the enclosure, some fifty years ago, the glebe in Burton Agnes, Canon Isaac Taylor's parish, was made up in this way; and the whole parish lay in open fields. Totternhoe, near Dunstable, was so farmed till 1886. In most cases the old tilled land, the best in the parish, has gone back to valuable pasture, still marked with the run-rigs, or selions, a furlong long and a perch broad, and two feet high, just as they were left by the Domesday co-operative ploughs. Worse land, formerly unreclaimed, now forms most of our tilled fields.

To understand either Domesday, or any of the books that treat of it, one must know something of the words employed. Acre is the Latin *ager* (field), and had no specific reference to size, though in Edward the First's time the ideal acre was a rectangle forty perches (or a furlong, furrow-long) long by four wide. A bovat is a very common measure in Domesday. It clearly means as much as an ox could till in the year, and thus would differ on different soils. The carucate is what the plough (that is, team of four oxen on light, of eight on heavy land) could manage in a year, and varied from sixty to a hundred of our acres. Oldest of all is the hide, which occurs in the laws of Ina (A.D. 620). All sorts of fanciful meanings have been given for it. Classical scholars have

connected it with the old story told of so many towns that, being granted only so much land as he could enclose in an ox-hide, a crafty leader cut his hide into narrow strips, and so got a fair quantity. Alfred translates the Latin *familia* by *hydeland*; and as a measure it was what one plough (all that a group of householders in the olden time possessed) could get through in the year. Hence it should be the same as the *carucate*; but the quantity practically varies with the goodness, easiness to work, and situation, convenient or otherwise, of the land.

Equally irregular and uncertain was the *virgate*, which, in a charter of 1200 A.D., is fixed at a quarter of the hide. In the Battle Abbey register there are eight *virgates* to the hide. The whole arrangement was on a sliding scale, depending on the nature of the soil: poor, rough land being—as in an Irish lease—thrown in without stint; good land being carefully measured. Wood, too, was carefully measured; it was valuable both for fuel, and also for pannage—pig-feeding on beechmast and acorns. Where, as in parts of Kent, lands had no wood, they were provided with dens—word still preserved in Deepdene, and other village names—or pig-feeding tracts, often far away. But forest-land, not being enquired into for assessment, is like church-land, only incidentally mentioned; and only one, the New Forest, was specially surveyed for the Record. A proof at once of the destruction wrought in forming this forest, and of the elastic size of the hide, is, that from two hundred and eighteen hides, the district was reduced to seventy-six. The acreage remained the same; the number of families it could support was reduced to a third.

*Park* is perhaps a Celtic word, denoting a piece of ground hedged off for the game to be kept in. The hundred, much older than Alfred, may have consisted of a hundred hides, or it may have been the district, which, containing a hundred households, would be bound to furnish one hundred men to the Militia. In Lincoln and Nottingham it got to be called *Wapentake* (weapon-teaching), its men being wont to meet for training.

Manor, of course, is *manoir*, the place where the lord usually remains. The creation of manors went on till the statute of "quia emptores" stopped it in the eighteenth year of Edward the First. The persistence of Domesday manor-names is remarkable. They are found, clipped and

disfigured, in the names of fields, houses, and so on, where the manor itself has long ceased to have any existence.

We must not think that the whole land changed hands. The survey, made twenty years after Hastings, contains Saxon and Danish names. Turchil, of Wilts, held the land his father had held before him; Turchil, of Warwick (alias of Arden), must have been specially favoured, for he held seventy-one manors, whereas his father, Alwine, the Sheriff, only held four. Rufus, however, destroyed the short-lived prosperity of the family—took from Turchil's son, Siward, nearly all the manors, and made him hold the remainder under the Earl of Warwick. Teodric, the Surrey goldsmith, kept the land which he had held from Edward the Confessor. So did Ulketel, of Norfolk, descendant of him who stood against the Danes; or he may be the very man, and his stand may not have been against Danes but against encroaching lords of manors. Anyhow, the Marshland hero, now known as Tom Hickathrift, "who made a brave stand against some person or persons unknown," is supposed to have been an Ulketel. Again, Osbern, son of Richard, held his lands, though they were in five counties. His father had built a castle in Herefordshire, and, therefore, probably was Normanised more or less. There are many more—Alurics, Siwards, Oswolds, Swains, who, having been tenants "in capite," still held their land.

But their total number, about five hundred, is small, compared with the number of the dispossessed. Ailric, for instance, held Kelvedon, in Essex. He went to sea to fight the Norman invaders, and, returning, fell ill. Whereupon, he gave his land to St. Peter's Abbey, Westminster. But Domesday expressly says the monks have no charter to confirm their right. Now, there are two charters extant—one of Edward the Confessor, confirming Ailric's gift long before he is supposed to have given it; and another, of William, also confirming the gift, and referring to the Confessor's confirmation. Of course, Childe Alnod, or Ulnoth, Harold's younger brother, lost his lands. Alnod was a hostage in Normandy, when William sailed across. Asgar the Haller—that is, master of the horse—was a great landowner, into whose possessions Geoffry of Mandeville entered. Brictric held this honour of Gloucester, and many manors besides. His fate was a very hard one.



Maud, daughter of Count Baldwin, of Flanders, fell in love with him when he was Ambassador at her father's court. He would none of her; and now, as Queen of William, she used her power to get all his lands confiscated, and himself imprisoned at Winchester. Edric the Savage (Silvaticus) seems to have had better luck than landowners in more settled parts. Dispossessed by the Castellane of Hereford, and Osbern Scrot (Scroot), son of Richard, the Normanised Thane aforesaid, he leagued with the Welsh chiefs, Bethgert and Ritwald, wasted Herefordshire as far as the Lugg, and carried off a vast booty.

Here is a glimpse of light. One can contrast Edric the stout old Saxon with Osbern, his renegade countryman. In "Ivanhoe," we have the materials for building up, as it were, the two men who must have been so wholly alike. But this is a rare case. Most of the names, both of the dispossessed and of the lucky few who held on, are mere names for us.

All we can suppose is that, while the former had been out at Hastings, or had sent aid to Harold, the latter had failed to help their country at the fatal crisis. Gurth, of course, lost his head, though, whether he was killed at Hastings by his brother's side, as the Bayeux tapestry tells the tale, or, whether "the Romance of King Harold" is to be believed, is uncertain. The "Romance" says that Harold was found, not by the Swan-neck, but by two monks; and was, by the skill of a Saracen woman, cured of his wounds!

Gurth also escaped, says the "Romance," and lived to a great age, and had speech with Henry the Second and with the nobles of his time. Five Siwards lost their heads, and Uchtreds innumerable, and several Siberts; from one of whom is named Shepherd's Well, in Kent. From another, perhaps, Shepherd's Bush, in West London. Brixī, another of the dispossessed, is supposed to be the name-father of Brixton. Faucy the Brixton Bon Marché being, perhaps, on the site of the old Thane's wooden hall!

Many noble Saxons found a refuge in monasteries: Waltheof, son of Cospatric, Earl of Northumberland—not the Waltheof who married Judith and afterwards rebelled against his wife's uncle (the paucity of Saxon names is confusing)—became the Abbot of Croyland. Harold's admiral was abbot of Saint Benet Holme, of which, to this day, the Bishop of Norwich is Abbot. Elsi, Abbot of Ramsey, had been

a courtier of Edward the Confessor. Sometimes their daughters were married to the Norman interlopers; sometimes these got the land without the "incumbrance."

A deal has been made of the lament in the Saxon Chronicle over the harsh minuteness of the assessors: "Not an ox, nor a cow, nor a swine, but it was set down in the writing." Except in the three eastern counties—its survey of which is seemingly a transcription in full of the original returns—the Exchequer Domesday only gives the live-stock on the manors, and says nothing of the property of the peasants. This is proved by a comparison with those earlier surveys, the Exeter Domesday and the "Inquest of the county of Cambridge," in which the whole live-stock of the county is enumerated.

The King did not want to know this, at least for taxing purposes. He had to do only with the lords of manors; the peasants were answerable not to him, but to their over-lords.

The Saxon chronicler relates how the King, in 1085, at Gloster, in mid-winter, held his court. "And very deep speech held he with his witan about this land: how it was peopled, and by what men. Then sent he his men over all England, into every shire, and caused to be ascertained . . . and what dues he ought to have in twelve months from the shire." And next year, at the close of the survey, he received at Sarum the submission of all the chief landowners to military tenure—the formal establishment, that is, of the feudal system—they becoming his men, and compacting to be faithful to him both within and without the realm. The Commissioners had not much time for their work; hence, no doubt, their free use of earlier surveys. Their record is not free from manifest errors. The Italian scribes (Lanfranc's men, probably) misspelt several of the names; but on the whole it is a wonderful testimony how well William was served. He was just one of those men who, by force of character, secure good service.

The name, Domesday, occurs as early as the middle of the twelfth century; dooms (domes) were laws in old English—Ælfred's code is his *domboc*. On the other hand, *domes-day* is used in the Saxon gospels, and in Canute's laws, and also in Cædmon, for the day of judgement. In its colophon Domesday Book calls itself "Descriptio," and other titles were "Rotulus Wintoniæ" (the Winchester

Roll, from the place where it was first kept), "Liber Regis" (King's book), etc. In regard to taxation, the survey incidentally shows how very unfair it was to the towns. These all had to pay the same as they paid in Edward the Confessor's time; though, in almost every case, they were decayed. In Shrewsbury, for instance, Earl Roger de Montgomery's castle occupied the site of fifty-one houses, and fifty others were lying waste. This performance of old usage is seen in the enforcement of the "trinoda necessitas"—triple charge laid on all landowners all through Anglo-Saxon times. It was for the repair of bridges, the keeping up of the local fortress, and the supply of men for the army. Sometimes the maintenance of the old custom was a distinct advantage to the English; thus, at Dover, whoever paid his customary rent to the King was free of toll throughout England. Feudalism does not seem to have quite killed out private ownership of land. "Alodarii," holders in allodium (all lot) or fee simple, are mentioned in Kent and Berks. At the other end of the scale would be the "servi" ("theows," the villeins answering to "ceorls"). They get either wages or food at the discretion of their masters. Equally under their lord's hand were the "ancillæ"—female slaves. Very numerous—upwards of eighty-two thousand, almost, that is, a third of the total population—were the "bordarii"—probably from "bord," a boarded hut, so named in King Eadgar's Charter. In some counties they are called "cotarii"—cottagers. They had, in return for their cottage, to give the lord eggs, poultry, and such small dues, and also to give task work—often one day a week. Towns had certain duties to the King, which they might redeem by money payments, the amount of which shows what a fancy price was set on certain articles; thus, while a horse was only worth twenty shillings, a hawk—in training which, probably, a deal of time had to be spent—was reckoned at ten pounds.

And so, from this old survey, we get some idea of what the England of that day was like, and how great was the change when the Normans came in. A comparison between William's Domesday and that begun for several counties in the present reign, would be instructive. It was a surprise to many to find how very many small proprietors there are now; but many of them own nothing but a house. Many will be astonished to find

that, in 1086, eleven proprietors held four thousand two hundred and forty-two manors; the King owning one thousand four hundred and twenty-two; the Earl of Mortaign seven hundred and ninety-three; Alan, Earl of Brittany, four hundred and forty-two; the De Lacys, between them, one hundred and eighty. Probably the lowest stratum of society was scarcely touched at all; it would matter little to Wamba whether he was "born thrall of Cedric the Saxon," or the "servus" of Cedric's supplanter. The Cedrics were not always good masters; for one thing, they were slave-dealers, which the Normans are not accused of being. Young male thralls they sold to Ireland; in girls there was a traffic with Denmark.

I do not know under what conditions Domesday Book, since 1697 in the Record Office—its old place having been in the Exchequer—can be seen. It will be long before any one again has the chance of seeing all the parial surveys collected in one place. Before then, they will, doubtless, all be multiplied by photography. Let us hope that none of them will share the fate which befell the chief Domesday. Twenty years ago, it was taken to Southampton to be photographed, and there despoiled of its old binding—a part of its life history—and rebound in a new-fangled style. May none of the other books ever suffer from such Vandalism!

## IN A COUNTRY TOWN OF CHILI.

CONTRASTING prettily with the brown, metal-bearing mountains, which rise in glazing nakedness all round, La Serena lies in a green and sheltered valley, through which a small river winds down to the noble Bay of Coquimbo, close by.

Never was a town more appropriately named. Except in the "winter" months—which have little of our notions of winter in them—when an occasional "norther" brings with its short, blustering gales a few welcome showers of rain, the sun shines down through a cloudless sky from year's end to year's end; its heat so tempered by the almost constant south wind blowing softly into the Bay, that enervating drowsiness is dispelled by day and sleep invited in the cool nights. Just outside the tropics, La Serena enjoys many tropical gifts, with few tropical disadvantages. Its climate, serene as the quiet

valley, approaches as near perfection as climate can.

The straggling suburbs of the town border upon the sea-shore, whence the ground, gradually, but in a curiously distinct series of plateaux—marking ancient sea-levels—rises to the mountains above. A broad beach of sand stretches round the bay with a splendid sweep, and upon it the blue Pacific beats in a succession of white rollers, which forbid landing, or even the construction of a pier.

La Serena, in consequence, has its harbour, Coquimbo, within the shelter of the southern horn of the Bay, nine miles distant. Standing on the beach here, we can see the promontory stretching out into the dim sea, resembling a miniature Gibraltar, with the white houses of the little sea-port town clinging to its steep sides; the masts of the shipping clear-cut against its barren yellow rocks.

A broad road leads from the beach, whereon we stand, into La Serena. On our right as we walk up it, is a plain of grassy fields, merging into a marsh, patched with reed-lined water-pools; which, again, as it approaches Coquimbo, merges into sand and rocks. On our left, the plain is varied with slight signs of homely cultivation, with isolated huts, and, at a distance, with a thick grove of eucalyptus. As we near the town, our road, which has gradually been becoming smoother, is shaded by trees on either side.

Just as we fairly arrive within the regions of general habitation, a railway line—unprotected by gates—crosses the road, passing through the marshes to Coquimbo. The railway station is close by, on our left: a picturesque place, surrounded with an ill-kept garden of flowers. Opposite to it—where the line disappears on our right—stands an equally picturesque building under the trees, devoted to the brewing of country ale.

And now, walking on from this point, our road resolves itself into a beautiful Alameda, or public promenade, bounded by a double line of trees on each side, shading the smooth, wide walk. Under them are seats, on which a few idlers lounge—enjoying, as Chilians do enjoy, the luxury of doing nothing—or children play, from independent imps of the people, bare-legged and brown-skinned, to nurse-fettered scions of the local aristocracy, dressed in French fashion, ornate and high-booted. But for these, the Alameda, in this early part of the day, is empty. At

night, however, when the town band is playing, and the moon is shining down through the trees, it is gay with many promenaders, and presents a lively Spanish scene.

Houses of varying pretensions border the Alameda behind the trees. At its upper end, the streets of the town are reached, and beauty yields to commerce. The streets are roughly paved, and dirty; the houses, painted white, or of pale tint, are plain and rectangular, their smooth walls broken only by light verandahs before the upper windows, and by the flagstaffs projecting over every door. The shops are poor. But the street scenes are interesting enough. Creaking waggons, drawn by oxen, lumber noisily over the stones, the dark skins and high cheek-bones of their drivers showing Indian descent. Lighter horse-drawn carts and shabby hackney coaches pass by, but very few respectable private carriages are seen. Outside a saddler's shop stands the picturesque figure of a "Huaso," mounted on a small but strong and spirited horse. The "Huaso" is a distinctive personage of Chili, answering somewhat to the Guacho of Eastern South America. He spends his life mounted on his horse, which he manages with consummate skill; his occupation—when he has one—usually being cattle-driving on the "haciendas," or farms, of the country. More than half-Indian, dark, silent, fierce, he is an unpleasant individual to meet at night in a lonely country road, for he is unscrupulous and ready with his knife, especially when, as is frequently the case, he has imbibed a quantity of "aquadiente" in the low drinking-places of the town. A wide hat of well-worn straw shades his unshaven face; a "poncho"—in appearance like a striped blanket, with a hole in its centre, through which his head emerges—conceals his shabby dress. From his heels project monstrous spurs, cruel as the powerful bit which renders his horse obedient to a touch. At his saddle of Mexican pattern, hangs the "lazo," his implement of office, in the use of which he is astonishingly dexterous. His high, leather boots rest in gigantic wooden stirrups—blocks of carved wood—which protect his feet from the press of cattle.

With downcast eyes a priest strides along the rough pavement, his black shovel-hat and cassock dusty, his chin half-shaved. He is not saluted with alacrity as he passes, for the priesthood is neither popular nor powerful in Chili. The

priests are not, as a rule, drawn from the best classes of the people, and are seldom of high education or learning.

The women we pass have their heads shrouded in the national "manto," a hood or cloak of thin black stuff, larger and more unbecoming than the graceful "mantilla" of Spain. It is usually worn by women of the lower classes, and invariably by women of all ranks for church-going. Beauty among the Chilians is rare. Among the people we meet, are types of very various complexions, from darkest brown to fairest red and white, according to the greater or less admixture of Indian blood with Spanish, or to station of life. The entirely pure Indian is not seen in this part of the country, and indeed, like most other aborigines, is becoming extinct.

Some of the small houses, tenanted by the poorer portion of the populace, are exceedingly dirty; and one can hardly feel surprise at the quick spread of disease among them, a fact proved with fatal effect by the late epidemic of cholera in Chili. Sitting in the doorway of some of these squalid abodes, women may be seen, as we pass by, holding a small gourd in their hands, from which a liquor is imbibed by a tube. This liquor is "maté," a herb which may be called the tea of South America, and is largely consumed by the poor. Its taste is not unpleasant, and slightly aromatic, but in no way resembles that of tea. It is invariably drunk in the manner described, by means of a tube plunged among the herb-leaves, upon which boiling water has been poured.

We shortly arrive at a church of dark-brown stone, evidently one of the oldest buildings in the town. Entering, we see the usual mixture of extreme plainness, with an almost childish tawdriness. Daubs of sacred subjects adorn the plastered walls here and there. A great crucifix hangs near the pulpit, with a life-size painted figure of our Lord upon it, which has been clothed by some devout person with a short skirt of pink muslin, trimmed with a gold edging—resembling the dress of a "danseuse"—an outrage upon taste that is literally shocking, though probably committed with all reverence. In dim corners of the building, and by the plain pillars, kneel the shrouded forms of pious women, who constitute the chief portion of a Chilian congregation, religion among the men being rare.

We pass out of the church, and, walking on, soon arrive at the "plaza"—the public

square to be found in every Spanish town. It is small, but full of shading trees and beautiful flowers, growing in untended profusion. This fertility of the soil is surprising to a visitor whose first impression of this part of the country is that of dearth of vegetation. But this dearth is due to lack of water and infrequent rains. Wherever water can moisten the grateful ground, a garden upstarts. Water, however, is scarce, except in the towns and close to the river banks; and thus the country, really rich, is apparently sterile. Here, in the fragrant square, are seats where the indolent may dream under the trees to the cool plash of the fountain in the centre, and the humming of bees and "whiz" of dragon-flies among the flowers. The quiet "plaza" is typical of the whole town. The busiest streets have little noise; the by-streets are silent.

We enter an hotel for luncheon, or, properly speaking, in Chili, breakfast. The building is dingy and ill-kept; its rooms scantily furnished, but clean. Like most of the better buildings of the town, it is square-shaped, enclosing a courtyard called the "patio," in which a few flowers grow neglected. Some of the houses, in the less dense parts of the town, have, beyond this "patio," a garden, enclosed by high walls which hide it from the public view of the streets.

The manner of serving meals in the Chilian hotel is not at all according to English ideas of comfort. A vast succession of courses is hastened through with inconvenient speed, each being placed on the table directly its predecessor has been commenced upon. The viands themselves are good; meat, vegetables, and fruit are abundant and cheap, and the country wines and ale are excellent. The cost of living in Chili is absurdly small. One can live comfortably in a country hotel like this on five or six shillings a day.

In the afternoon we sally forth to call, for the first time, on the local "lady of fashion." The house is large, facing a quiet side-street. We knock at the knockless door, and a slatternly olive-skinned maid appears, who conducts us to an empty drawing-room, thence precipitately retiring, "Gringos"—as the English are for some unknown reason termed by the Chilians—being to her lowly mind objects of some awe. While waiting for the Señora to appear, we notice that the room lacks the appearance of comfort characteristic of an English drawing-room. The furniture



is good—even grand—but disposed stiffly; the walls are garnished with mirrors and with pictures displaying an entire absence of artistic taste.

Soon our hostess enters. She is a good type of the lady of Chili; short, plump, dark-eyed and black-haired; her rounded face has lost much of its original whiteness. She is dressed in black; an almost invariable rule among the more elderly ladies of the country. She seats herself, after a smiling welcome greeting, on a couch or backed-settee placed against the middle of one of the walls, usually a place of honour, where the hostess sits with a favoured guest. The remaining seats are placed with over much precision round the room. The Señora is shortly followed by her two daughters; excellent representatives of Chilean beauty, as their mother doubtless once was. The hair and eyes constitute their chief charm, both being brilliant and dark. Their complexions are delicately fair, but suggestive of the aid of art; cosmetics, in fact, are largely used by the ladies of Chili, apparently without concealment. The Señoritas are dressed in French fashions, which are closely followed in Chili in all their gaiety of colour, abundance of appendage, and absurdity of construction and protuberance. The quieter English taste appears to be less popular.

Conversation freely flows, for the ladies of Chili, though generally superficial and insincere, are, in conversation and social intercourse, pleasant and lively; and, unlike their husbands and brothers, especially friendly to the English. Our linguistic shortcomings are treated with indulgent politeness. In spite of the numbers of English in the country, few Chilians speak English, or other foreign languages; and even their own Castilian is extremely slovenly. It is not difficult to gather, from our conversation, that the life of a fair "Chilena" in the country is circumscribed and uneventful. Gossip of the very lightest description forms the staple of talk. Events outside Chili—indeed, outside her own town—interest her little. Her knowledge of literature is confined to Spanish novels and poems; of the arts, to a certain amount of operatic and dance music. Her amusements are small: a visit to her friends for gossip or music, a walk to the Alameda or Plaza to hear the band, a little shopping, and now and then a ball, or a poor opera by a travelling company. Out-of-door exercise she does not understand; lawn-tennis is regarded

as one of the eccentricities of the "Gringo."

Liqueurs are handed round, and drunk with some ceremony. Five o'clock tea is, unhappily, not yet known to the Chilians. Soon afterwards we take our leave, our kind hostess uttering the usual hospitable formula to a new acquaintance: "Ya sabe Usted su casa" (you now know your house); or, more freely rendered, "make yourself at home here."

In the evening, after dinner, which takes place throughout Chili at an early hour—usually between five and six o'clock—we emerge once more from the hotel to spend the evening with some older acquaintances of the town, in accordance with a previous invitation. Their house reached, we enter the drawing-room, which resembles in character that already described, and find assembled half-a-dozen young ladies, the hostess, another duenna, and two or three Chilean gentlemen. The latter are, as a rule, silent and retiring in society, paying more attention to the wine in the background than to the ladies. None of the company are in evening dress, which is seldom seen, except on great occasions.

Music and dancing now take place, which, in this small way, form the most frequent style of evening entertainment. The dancing is not, as a rule, good; at least, according to English notions. But the national dance of Chili, the "samacueca," familiarly called the "cueca," is graceful and interesting, and more than once is danced in the course of the evening. A lady and a gentleman step forward, holding a handkerchief in hand, as the piano sounds the opening bars of the accompanying music, which is of marked and peculiar rhythm in triple time. Some of the on-lookers then burst into song, to which the dancers move, with appropriate gestures, the gentleman apparently making advances to the lady, who resists him coquettishly; the feet of both moving in time to the music with not very complicated steps. The handkerchiefs are, throughout, gracefully and incessantly waved by each performer. Two verses, with a pause between them, complete the dance.

The musical portion of the evening's entertainment is chiefly instrumental, few Chilean ladies being able to sing. Their voices, when they have any, are thin and weak, whether from their mode of life, from the climate, or from their mixed descent—for few families of Chili are free from Indian blood—it is hard to say.

Modern Italian and French Opera form the répertoire. The great composers of Germany, and the early Italian composers, are often literally unknown, even by name.

At about half-past ten the company adjourn to another room, in which is a large table, bearing tea, bread-and-butter, and sweet cakes, at which all take their seats. This light supper is a regular and invariable institution in Chilian families, the ladies of which are generally much addicted to cheap confectionery, a fact that, with their sedentary habits, probably accounts for the tendency to "embonpoint," which is sooner or later developed by them.

Returning to the drawing-room, music and dancing are resumed for another hour or so, when the retirement of the guests brings the simple but pleasant evening's amusement to a close. We step out into the street, which is silent, except for the occasional shrill whistles of the policemen signalling their watchfulness to one another, and walk back to our hotel in the cool night air, sweet with the scent of flowers, under a star-lit sky.

#### RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ.

It is the Spring, she comes, soft, sweet, and shy,  
Touching with magic wand on all she sees;  
Her cloudlets flit across the April sky,  
Her leaflets peep upon the barren trees;

Her whisper, wooing in the soft south breeze,  
Wakens from budding blooms a low reply;  
Her subtle stir runs over lawns and leas.  
It is the Spring, she comes, soft, sweet, and shy.

The snowdrop chimes the vernal melody,  
That rang through Paradise fair Eve to please;  
The primrose wakes as she goes gliding by,  
Touching with magic wand on all she sees;

The violet, loyal to her queen's decrees,  
Gleams through the mosses that around her lie;  
The blue waves laugh upon the sunny seas,  
The cloudlets flit across the April sky.

Nature, as one that, shaking off disease,  
Defies his fate; shouts, "'Tis not time to die,  
Earth has fresh glories for glad life to seize."  
It is the Spring, she comes, soft, sweet, and shy,  
It is the Spring!

#### TREE SUPERSTITIONS.

THERE is nothing in the whole world of Nature around which have not grown superstitions more or less whimsical and absurd. Trees have been, and still are, worshipped and venerated, and trees are also avoided as uncanny things, the very name of which must only be spoken in an awe-stricken whisper. Some are famous only for their peculiarities, and are neither feared nor liked. A list, numbering no

less than fifty such trees, now lies before me, the first of which is the apple-tree. Apart from the veneration that has been associated with this, as a mistletoe-bearing tree, it has been, in times past, customary on the part of farmers and others to toast, and, in a sense, offer up sacrifices, to this common fruit-tree.

According to the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1791, the farmer of South Devonshire, attended by his workmen, with a large pitcher of cider, was formerly in the habit of going to the orchard and there encircling one of the best bearing trees, when the company would drink the following toast several times:

Here's to thee, old apple-tree,  
Whence thou may'st bud,  
And whence thou may'st blow,  
And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!  
Hats full! caps full!  
Bushel, bushel sacks full!  
And my pockets full, too! Huzzah!

This done, they would return to the house, the doors of which they were sure to find shut and bolted by the females, who, be the weather what it might, were inexorable to all entreaties to open them until some one of those on the other side had guessed what was cooking on the spit. This was generally some tasty little titbit, difficult to be hit on, and which was the reward of him who first named it. The doors were then thrown open, and the lucky guesser received the morsel as his recompense. Some farmers were so steeped in superstition as to believe that, if this custom had been neglected, the trees would bear no apples that year.

The ash has always been associated with superstition, more of a divinatory character than anything else. It is an article of Icelandic belief that the wood of the mountain-ash should never be used for fuel, because all who sit round a fire composed of it would of a certainty become enemies. A rough poem of the Middle Ages informs the curious that we should

Burn ash wood green,  
'Tis fire for a queen;  
Burn ash wood sear  
'Twill make a man swear.

The even-leaved ash played a very important part in ancient love charms, as by it lovelorn damsels were enabled to discover their future husbands. It was also good for bringing luck if invoked in these words:

Even ash, I do thee pluck,  
Hoping thus to meet good luck;  
If no luck I get from thee,  
I shall wish thee on a tree.

Amongst the ancients it was generally believed that lightning would not touch the bay-tree, and, in consequence, its leaves were used as a charm against the lightning's flash. An old poem informs us that "Thunder nor fierce lightning harmes the bay," and the writer of a complimentary poem to Ben Jonson says:

I see that wreath which doth the wearer arme  
Gainst the quick stroakes of thunder, is no charme  
To keep off death's pale dart; for, Jonson, then  
Thou had'st been numbered still with living men;  
Time's scythe had feared thy lawrell to invade;  
Nor thee this subject of our sorrow made.

The withering of the bay-tree was considered an omen of the most dangerous character, and a sure presage of death. Shakespeare makes use of this belief in "Richard the Second," thus:

'Tis thought the King is dead; we'll not stay—  
The bay-trees in our country are withered.

It is also regarded as an emblem of the resurrection, and Sir Thomas Browne tells us that when apparently dead it will often revive, and its dry leaves expand with their former freshness.

The bay-tree was known, prior to the Christian era, as the tree of Apollo, the legend stating that Daphne was transformed by Jupiter into a bay-tree, in order to save her from the pursuit of Apollo. Through this, its leaves were chosen to form the wreath with which poets and successful competitors in games were crowned. The Pythian priestesses used to chew the leaves because, after a season of abstinence, they produced some degree of excitement which went by the names of prophecy and inspiration.

Like the ash, it possesses divinatory powers, and formerly, at Christmas time, it was customary to crush the leaves in the hollow of the hand. If they gave off a crackling sound the lover was true; if not, he was false. Gay told those who lived in his time that—

When rosemary and bay, the poet's crown,  
Are bawled in frequent cries through all the town,  
Then judge the festival of Christmas near.

From this it would appear that the bay was used at Christmas time for decorative purposes, as the holly and mistletoe are now.

There is evidence that some virtue or significance was once associated with the box-tree, by the discovery of twigs of this tree in some of the old British barrows in Essex. What that virtue was cannot now be ascertained; but in all probability it had some connection with the words of Isaiah, that "the box-tree shall flourish in the

land of Israel, when the waste places shall resume their ancient fruitfulness, and become the garden of the Lord."

There is one tree in Asia, the only tree of the kind known to exist, which bears the name of Buddha's hair tree. The story runs, that the hair of Teong Kaba, the founder of Buddhism, was cut off when he was three years of age. It was thrown outside his parent's tent, and from it grew a remarkable tree, every leaf of which bears on its surface a character in the sacred language of Thibet. The Abbé Huc, the famous traveller, declared that the tree was quite free from even the suspicion of a fraud. He also states that, though many attempts had been made to propagate the tree by seeds and cuttings, all had failed. The Lamasery connected with the tree is a great place of resort for pilgrims.

Next in alphabetical order comes the cypress-tree, which by us is usually associated with mourning and death, owing probably to its dark and sombre hue. From very remote times, in the East, however, it has been associated with births, and marriages, and rejoicings generally. When, amongst the inhabitants of the Greek Archipelago, a daughter was born, a grove of cypress-trees was planted by her father as her future portion, her dowry increasing as her years multiplied. By this means we are enabled to trace the origin of the name by which these groves were designated, "daughters' dowers." The oldest known tree in Europe is a cypress, at Souma, in Lombard, Italy. It is believed to be nineteen hundred and twenty-nine years of age, is one hundred and six feet high, and twenty feet in circumference one foot from the ground. Napoleon, when laying down his plan for the great road over the Simplon, diverged from a straight line in order to avoid injuring this tree. Strabo mentions a cypress in Persia two thousand five hundred years old; and De Candolle relates that he saw one in Mexico which measured one hundred and twenty feet round at its base. This he considered to be older than the baobab-tree of Africa, which, it is estimated, has existed five thousand seven hundred years.

About the elder-tree there has grown up quite a luxury of superstitions, principally owing to the tradition that it was on an elder-tree that Judas went out and hanged himself. The twigs of this tree were formerly believed to be a specific against epilepsy. An old quack says:

"In the month of October, a little before full moon, pluck a twig of the elder and cut the cane that is between two of its knees or knots in nine places, bind these pieces in a piece of linen; hang this by a thread about the neck so that they touch the spoon of the heart, or the sword-formed cartilage. And that they may the more firmly stay in their place, bind them thereon with a linen or silken roller wrapped about the body till the thread break of itself. The thread being broken and the roller removed, the charm is not to be touched at all with bare hands, but should be taken hold of by some instrument and buried in a place that nobody may touch it."

A strict observance of this charm was once regarded as an infallible remedy for epilepsy. The leaves of the elder, gathered on the last day of April, were used for curing wounds and charming witches away.

"Boys," says an old writer, "must not be beaten with an elder stick; it hinders their growth."

Of the elm-tree it has been said by a versifier of the past:

When elmen leaf is as big as a mouse's ear,  
Then to sow barley never fear;  
When elmen leaf is as big as an ox's eye,  
Then sing Hie! boys, Hie!

Of course verses such as these were written before the change in the calendar, and some allowance must be made also for the change of climate which has come over the country.

I now come to a tree about which pages of folk-lore might be written—I mean the sweet-scented hawthorn; but, as brevity is the soul of wit, I will condense this mass into as small a compass as possible.

Scott, in his "Witchcraft," tells of the sprig of hawthorn being gathered on May-day, and hung in the entry of a house as a presumed preservative against all evil influences, and bad spirits. The ancient Greeks made it emblematic of Hope, and carried it in their wedding processions, beside using it to deck the altar of Hymen. But since this time it has undergone a strange change in public opinion, for, in Derbyshire, if a child brought a sprig into the house, it was at once thrown out, because "the flowers smell like death," and "if the May withers in the house the death of some member of the family will shortly follow."

This superstition is by no means peculiar to the county of Derby, for the plant has, more or less, a bad name everywhere. In

some parts, the very act of sleeping in a room where the hawthorn is, is regarded as the precursor of dire misfortune. Perhaps we may find the reason for this in a passage in Sir John Mandeville's Travels:

"Then was our Lord yled into a gardeyn, and there the Jewes scorned hym and maden hym a crown of the braunches of the albiespyne, that is whitethorn, that grew in the same gardeyn, and settyen yt upon hys heaed. And, therefore, hath the whitethorn many virtues. For he that beareth a branch on hym thereof, no thundre, ne no maner of tempest may dere hym, ne in the house that yt is ynne may non evil ghost enter."

To a belief that the white-thorn formed Christ's crown of thorns, is due a French superstition that this tree utters groans and cries on Good Friday.

Brand, in his "Antiquities," states that: "It was an old custom in Suffolk, in most of the farm-houses, that any servant who could bring in a branch of hawthorn in full blossom on the first of May, was entitled to a dish of cream for breakfast. This custom is now disused, not so much from the reluctance of the masters to give the reward, as from the inability of the servants to find the whitethorn in flower" on that day.

There was formerly—so we are told by tradition—a hawthorn-tree which grew on a hill in Glastonbury Abbey burying-ground, which budded and blossomed regularly on Christmas Day. The Abbey, which is now a heap of ruins, was said by the monks to have been the residence of Joseph of Arimathea, and, according to their story, he came to England with eleven followers, and raised the first Christian temple to the Virgin. On the first day of his arrival, Christmas Day, he fixed his staff in the ground as a kind of standard. The staff immediately took root, put forth leaves, and the next day—like Aaron's rod—was covered with blossoms, thereby showing the approbation of the Almighty concerning the work about to be commenced.

According to the "London Evening Post," a vast concourse of people attended the noted thorn on Christmas Eve, 1753; but to their great disappointment there was no appearance of it blooming. They, however, watched it narrowly until January the sixth—Christmas Day, old style—when it bloomed as usual.

Formerly there also grew in a gentleman's garden at Aberglasney, Carmarthen—



shire, a hawthorn which flowered on Christmas Day; but on the next day all the blossoms faded. The people who flocked to see this phenomenon were so numerous that the owner of the garden ordered the tree to be cut down, since which time no single blade of grass has grown on the spot, except at Christmas Eve; but this, like the hawthorn-blossom, dies the next morning.

A similar circumstance is recorded in the "Gentleman's Magazine" as having occurred at Quainton, Bucks.

In the South of England there is a well-established belief that

If you sweep the house with the blossomed broom in May,

You're sure to sweep the head of the house away.

As illustrative of this superstition, an anecdote is related as having occurred in a Sussex village. A poor girl was lingering in the last stage of consumption; but her countenance always lighted up at the sight of flowers. One day, though, she appeared so unhappy after a nosegay of bright spring flowers had been laid on her bed, that she was asked if the smell was disagreeable. "Oh, no," she replied, "they are very nice indeed; but I should be very glad if you would throw away that piece of yellow bloom, for they do say death comes with it if it is brought into the house in the month of May." I have never heard this superstition spoken of anywhere north of the Trent, though it may possibly exist.

From Mexico there comes a "peculiar tree known as the 'tree of little hands.'" It is thus called owing to the fact that its five peculiarly-curved anthers bear some slight resemblance to the fingers of a child.

Anything more preposterous than the uses to which the hazel is put cannot possibly be conceived. It is one of the most picturesque of our flowering shrubs; but it has but a poor repute owing to its too intimate connection with the black art. Its branches are termed "the rod of Jacob," "the twig," and "the divining rod;" and formerly it was no unusual sight to see persons wandering, apparently aimlessly, about fields and through villages with one of these branches or twigs in their hands, seeking, through its deflection, for water, buried hoards, or to discover criminals. The belief has died out somewhat, though it still exists. It is also believed that a twig of the hazel placed over the door of a dwelling-house is an infallible charm

against lightning; and various other supernatural powers are attributed to this mystic tree.

The juice of the hemlock, which is deadly in its effect, was extracted by the Greeks; and, in cases of capital offences, the criminal was given a dose if his crime had not been particularly heinous.

About the holly I might say much, but shall content myself on the present occasion with only a few words. Throughout Germany this tree bears the name of "Christ's Thorn;" presumably, because it berries at the time of our Saviour's birth. Legendary history informs us that it was in a holly-bush that the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire; and also that the cross on which the Saviour was crucified was made of holly, on which account it bears the name of "Lignum Sanctæ Crucis." The holly-tree has become an object of worship, like the mistletoe; and at one time new-born children were sprinkled with water impregnated with holly to ward off evil spirits.

Carols have been penned in praise of the holly, one of which, written in the time of Henry the Sixth, says:

Nay, Ivy! nay, it shal not be I wys;  
Let Holy hafe the maystery, as the maner ys,  
Holy stond in the halle, fayre to behold;  
Ivy stond without the dore; she ys full fore a cold.

Holy and hys merry men they dawnsin and they syng—  
Ivy and her maydenys they wepyn and they wrying.  
Ivy hath a lybe; she lightit with the cold,  
So mot they alle haf that wyth Ivy hold.

Holy hath berys as red as any rose,  
The foster the hunters kepe hym from the doo (pain).  
Ivy hath berys as black as any slo;  
There come the oule and ete hym as she goe.

Holy hath byrdys, a ful fayre flok,  
The nyghtyngale, the poppyngy, the gayntyl lavy-rock.  
Good Ivy! what byrdys art thou?  
Non but the Howlet that "How! How!"

I may as well here deal with the ivy, which is said to be symbolic of eternal life, on account of its clinging nature and extreme age. The Egyptians dedicated it to Osiris, and the Greeks and Romans to Bacchus. The latter, the god of wine, is invariably represented as crowned with a chaplet of ivy, because the ancients believed that ivy would neutralise the intoxicating influence of any excess in wine-drinking. To newly-married persons the ancient priests presented branches of ivy, as emblematic of the Gordian knot by which they were bound together.

In classic times the laurel, one of our most beautiful evergreens, was famous for

its many virtues. Those who slept beneath its branches were believed to be endowed with poetical inspiration; while it was regarded also as impervious to the lightning-shaft. It is recorded that the Emperor Tiberius, whenever the sky portended a storm, placed a chaplet of laurel round his neck. An old writer (seventeenth century) ridiculing the belief which continued right down to his time, stated that a few years before he wrote, a laurel-tree had been struck by lightning at Rome. In the Pythian games, the victors were rewarded with wreaths of laurel, while those in the Olympian games were formed of green parsley. Petrarch planted a grove of laurels around the grave of Virgil, at Baia, near Naples, the successors of which are still standing.

One of the peculiarities of vegetable life in Jamaica is what may, appropriately enough, be termed the "life-tree," from the tenacity with which it clings to life. It is impossible to kill the tree, either by plucking off its fruit, or by chopping it down. The only exterminator is fire.

The Brahmins believe that to dream of a mango-tree is indicative of the coming of a friend; that if the mango-tree be in bloom, he will come with good news; if in fruit, with some rich presents.

A very common tree in the East is the "manna-tree," the bark of which is purposely wounded to permit the flow of the manna. In odour it resembles honey; in taste it is sweet, with a subsequent bitter flavour; when eaten, it acts as a mild purgative, but it is also more or less nutritious and fattening. It is sought after and eaten by the Arabs, and by the monks of Mount Sinai.

The luckiest plant, or tree, for a house-window, it may be interesting to know, is the myrtle, as its possessor will be sure to gain fortune and happiness. By an old saw we are told to water it every evening, and be proud of it. On Saint Catherine's day, love charms may be worked with the assistance of a sprig of myrtle.

One of the noblest of English trees is the oak, enormous and ancient examples of which are to be seen in the parks attached to our old manor houses and castles. It was, once upon a time, believed that the oak-tree was mysteriously protected, and that any injury done it would be severely punished. This, of course, is a relic of the Druidic age. And the old superstition, which refuses to give up the ghost, is that if the oak gets into

leaf before the ash, we may expect a fine and productive year; while if the ash leaf before the oak, a cold summer and an unproductive autumn may be anticipated. Statistics kept from 1816 down to 1880 show that some slight attention may be paid to the omen. There is, however, an exception to every rule, and there is one to this. It is said of the Cadenham oak, in the New Forest, that it was once in the habit of budding on Old Christmas Day in honour of the birth of the Saviour, and that when the style was changed—from old to new—it refused to follow suit by budding on the eighth of January.

An old weather rhyme, dealing with the subject of trees and seasons, informs us that—

When the oak comes out before the ash,  
You'll have a summer of wet and splash;  
When the ash comes out before the oak,  
You'll have a summer of dust and smoke.

Then, further, we are told to—

Beware of the oak, it draws the stroke;  
Avoid an ash, it courts a flash;  
Creep under a thorn, it will save you from harm.

The foregoing, as a matter of course, refers to sheltering beneath trees during a thunderstorm.

The age attained by oaks is truly marvellous, as are also their girths. In Clifton Park there is an oak (the Parliamentary) said to be fifteen hundred years old, which was known to exist before the Conquest. Yorkshire boasts of one, the Calthorpe oak, which measures seventy-eight feet in circumference at the base. The Damary oak is sixty feet, and the Merton oak sixty-three feet. The tallest and straightest oak was one known as "The Duke's Walking-stick," which grew in Clipston Park, and was higher than Westminster Abbey. There was formerly in Nannau Park, Dolgelly, a blasted oak, known as the "Ceubron yr Ellyll," or the haunted oak, in which it is said Owain Glyndwr threw the body of his treacherous cousin, Howel Sele. Here the body remained for over a quarter of a century, until the tree was struck by lightning, and a grim skeleton showed itself. The tree was finally blasted in the early part of the present century. The romantic history of this oak is too long to tell; but visitors to the Switzerland of Wales have only to ask a few leading questions to become possessors of it. In Tredegar Hall, Monmouthshire, there is a room forty-two feet long, by twenty-seven wide, the floor and wainscot of which were obtained from one

oak-tree grown in the park. Amongst the minor great oaks may be mentioned the "Three Shires Oak," near Worksop, the "Baddington Oak," the "Hemstead Oak," and the "Salcey Oak." One of the chief attractions to visitors in the village of Noebdenitz, Saxony, is an oak five hundred years old, in which may be seen seated the skeleton of a former lord of Wintersheim.

It may not be generally known that many of the Queens of England have been in the habit of choosing oaks in Windsor forest to which they have given their name. This, with the date of choice, has been engraved on a brass plate, and fastened to the tree. Hence, in the most beautiful part of the forest, may be seen with seats around them trees bearing the names of Queen Anne, Queen Caroline, Queen Charlotte, and Queen Victoria. Herne's Oak, mentioned in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," as being in Windsor Park, was destroyed by the wind on the thirty-first of August, 1863.

The palm has gained a high distinction from the fact that, when the Saviour made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, branches of this tree were thrown down for him to pass over. In Catholic churches, on Palm Sunday, branches are carried round the church with great solemnity; after which they are blessed by the priest. It is or was considered very lucky to carry a piece of palm in the purse.

One of the most sacred trees in the East is the peepul, which is venerated alike by the Buddhist and the Hindoo. It is their tree of knowledge and wisdom; and under its branches it is believed that Vishnu was born, and that Gautama slept when he had his wonderful dream that he was about to become a Buddha. When the dream was fulfilled, Gautama was, by a remarkable coincidence, seated beneath the same tree. The leaves are heart-shaped, and vibrate in the open air in a manner similar to the aspen. A branch of the tree, together with the collar-bone, begging-dish, and other relics of Gautama, were sent to Amuradhapoora, in the interior of Ceylon, in the year (B.C.) 250 by Asoka. The tree which sprang from the branch is said to be still in existence, and is one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage of the Buddhists. Fergusson believed there was no older idol in the world. In its branches the natives say that all the good and evil spirits of the world lodge.

Arabia has a curious tree, the seeds of which, it is said, if pulverised and taken

in small doses, will excite even the most sedate persons to perform all the contortions, facial and bodily, of a circus clown for about the space of one hour. When the excitement tones down the person falls into a sound sleep, and, strangely enough, wakes up again without any recollection of the ridiculous figure he has been cutting.

The pine-tree is one of the most useful and luxuriant of our forest trees, and in ancient days it received an amount of veneration amongst the Greeks and Romans, similar to the oak-tree amongst the Druids. Seeds of the pine-tree were placed on the altars, and were regarded as certain specifics in some diseases. Indeed, when the Emperor Julian, 362 A.D., was spitting blood, and apparently nearing death's door, the oracle instructed him to take from the sacred altar some seeds of the pine, and mix them with honey. These he was to eat for three days. He did this, and, so the historian says, was cured.

The wood of the rowan-tree was formerly regarded as the most powerful spell that could be applied against the evil influences of witches and warlocks. Even the Evil Being himself could not withstand the charm. The witch, in the "Laidlaw Worm," is thus spoken of:

The spells were vain, the hag returned  
To the Queen in sorrowful mood—  
Crying that witches had no power  
Where there is rowan-tree wood.

In Hunter's "Annals of Rural Bengal," there is the following interesting instance of tree worship:

"Adjoining the Santal village is a grove of their national tree"—the sal (*shorea robusta*)—"which they believe to be the favourite resort of all the family gods (*lares*) of the little community. From its silent gloom the bygone generations watch their children playing their several parts in life. Several times a year the whole hamlet, dressed out in its showiest, repairs to the grove to do honour to the *lares rurales*, with music and sacrifice. Men and women join hands, and, dancing in a large circle, chant songs in remembrance of the original founder of the community, who is venerated as the head of the village pantheon. Goats, red cocks, and chickens are sacrificed; and while some of the worshippers are told off to cook the flesh for the coming festival at great fires, the rest separate into families and dance round the particular tree which they fancy their domestic *lares* chiefly haunt."

Another peculiar Indian tree is the "sorrowful tree," which also finds a home in South America. In both countries it grows in great abundance. The flowers, which possess a most fragrant but evanescent perfume, live only one night. In the evening they open, and by morning they are faded. Its blossoms, says a traveller, pour the most delicate fragrance on the evening air, and then fall in showers, bedewing the earth's bosom with sweetness. On account of the short life of its flowers, the tree is regarded as the emblem of mourning and of sorrow. From the tubes of the fallen flowers a bright yellow dye is obtained, which is used to give the rich colour to the turbans of the Mohammedans of India. The tree itself is but small of stature, and its leaves are rough.

In some parts of England there grows a peculiar thorn known as "Christ's thorn," thus named on account of the thorns bearing some slight resemblance to a cross. Miller says:

"It hath long, sharp spikes; the flower has fine leaves, in form of a rose; out of the flower cup, which is divided into several segments, rises the pointal, which becomes the fruit, shaped like a bonnet, having a shell almost globular, which is divided into three cells, in each of which is contained a roundish seed. This is by many persons supposed to be the plant from which our Saviour's crown of thorns was composed."

A peculiar, and at the same time useful tree, is one peculiar to Canada and Virginia, and which one could wish was common to England. It is generally known as the "toothache-tree," a name derived from the use to which its bark and capsules are applied—the relief of the tormenting pain, the toothache. In the United States it is also used for the cure of chronic rheumatism, doses of from ten grains to half a drachm of the prepared bark being used for the purpose. The tree is a very low and deciduous one, its leaves very much resembling those of the ash.

The angelica-tree is also supposed to possess similar virtues.

Supernatural, almost diabolical, influences are attributed to the famous upas-tree, which, according to all accounts, is so deadly, that, if a hot wind passes over it, an odour is carried along which is fatal to whoever breathes it. Old letters, written from Paris in 1642 by "The Turkish Spy," describe a plant cultivated in a garden in

the city that blasts all that grows within ten cubits of its roots. They call it "ill neighbour." He declares that there was a withered circle around it, while the tree itself was green and thrifty. There is a tradition of a poison, or upas, tree that grows in the Island of Java, from which a putrid steam rises and kills whoever it touches. Foersch, a Dutch physician (1783), says: "Not a tree nor blade of grass is to be found in the valley or surrounding mountains. Not a beast, or bird, or reptile, or living thing lives in the vicinity. On one occasion sixteen hundred refugees encamped within fourteen miles of it, and all but three hundred died within two months." The falsehood of this story is exposed by Bennett, who says: "The tree (upas), while growing, is quite innocuous, though the juice may be used for poison; the whole neighbourhood is most richly covered with vegetation; men may fearlessly walk under the tree, and birds roost in its branches." Darwin, in his "Loves of the Plants," has perpetuated Foersch's fable when he says:

On the blasted heath  
Fell Upas sits, the hydra tree of death.

It is probable that the fable of the blighting influence of the upas-tree has been derived from the fact that there is in Java a small tract of land on which nothing can live. This is caused, not by the "fell upas," but by emanations of carbonic acid gas, which are constantly going on. At the same time, it is quite true that the juice of the upas is a deadly poison.

The churchyard of Glastonbury was once famous for a walnut-tree, which grew there and budded with unremitting punctuality on the eleventh of June, old style. There is nothing to tell why this peculiarity should exist, and the tree being gone, nothing remains but the bare legend.

The "water-tree" is a species of vegetation peculiar to Madagascar. At the extremity of each branch there grows a broad, double leaf, several feet in length, which spreads itself out in a very graceful manner. By rapidly radiating the heat after sunset, the leaves collect on themselves a quantity of dew, which runs in tiny streams down the branches of the trunk, where it is collected in hollow squares at the root. By inserting a knife or piece of stick between the overlapping branches, a stream of water, somewhat similar to a fountain, immediately gushes forth.

It is said by some that the introduction



of the weeping-willow, an emblem of death, into England was as follows. Alexander Pope, the poet, while he lived in his pretty villa on the Thames, received a present of a basket of figs from Turkey. He was informed that the basket was made of the twigs of the same species of willow as those under which the Jews sat, while in captivity in Babylon. Pope, with a faint hope that these twigs would grow, planted them in his garden, and, to his great delight, they took root. Year by year he was besieged by visitors, who begged slips of these peculiar trees, and from them came all the weeping-willows in our land. Some doubt is cast on this story; but if it is not true, it is, at least, pretty. One thing is certain, the prefix "weeping" came from the fact that the Jews of Bible times sat under them and wept. The Bohemians had a superstition that it was on one of these trees Judas hanged himself; from which circumstance they esteemed it unlucky.

For some reason, yew-trees generally find their home in the churchyard, probably owing to their sombre appearance. Before the invention of guns, our ancestors made their bows of the yew-tree. It has been, from the earliest times, regarded as an emblem of mourning, first by the Egyptians, from whom the Greeks copied it. The Romans took the idea from the Greeks; and they, in their turn, introduced it into England, with their occupation of the island. In funeral processions, branches of the yew were carried over the dead by the mourners, and thrown under the coffin in the grave. It is also a solitary tree, the custom of planting them singly being equally ancient with its association with death.

The value set upon the yew and other trees is shown in an extract from the ancient laws of Wales: "A consecrated yew, its value is a pound; a mistletoe branch, three score pence; an oak, six score pence; principal branches of an oak, thirty pence; a yew-tree (not consecrated), fifteen pence; a sweet apple, three score pence; a sour apple, thirty pence; a thorn tree, seven pence half-penny; every other tree, four pence."

About five miles from the Hertfordshire residence of the Marquess of Salisbury, at a place called Tewin, or Jewin, there grows from out of a grave five large trees, about which there hangs a tale. It is said that Lady Grimstone, during her lifetime, denied the existence of a God; but added,

that if she found a God when she went hence, five trees would grow from out of her grave. In the natural order of events, her unbelieving ladyship died, and was buried. Singularly enough, five trees did grow from out of the grave, splitting the masonry to pieces, so that it and the railings which were around became a perfect wreck. How much truth there may be in the story, I cannot say; but the slab bore, or did bear, the following inscription: "Here lyeth inter'd the body of the Right Honorable Lady Anne Grimestone, wife of Sir Samuel Grimestone, Bart., of Gorhambury, in Hertfordshire, daughter of the late Right Honorable the Earl of Thanet, who departed this life Nov. 22, 1713, in the 60 year of her age." The circumstance has frequently been quoted as affording indubitable proof of the immortality of the soul.

I shall now, having exhausted my stock, draw this article to a close, after quoting Spenser's lines on various trees:

Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,  
The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,  
The vine prop elm, the poplar never dry,  
The builder oak, sole king of forest all;  
The aspen, good for staves; the cypress funeral.  
The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors  
And poets sage; the fir that weepeth still,  
The willow, worn of forlorn paramours,  
The yew, obedient to the bender's will,  
The birch for shafts, the saw for the mill,  
The myrrh, sweet bleeding of the bitter wound,  
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,  
The fruitful olive and the plantain round,  
The carver holm, the maple seldom inward sound.

## LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

By MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

*Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.*

### CHAPTER III. THE BITTER PAST.

GEORGE stands in the doorway, waiting the approach of those measured footsteps. He has a scared look, has George; for a warder, passing by, has whispered a strange sentence or two in his ear, and he is almost as intent upon watching the Chaplain as he is in watching poor old David, in the fervent hope that that veteran will rise to the occasion, and make a good end.

A low, feeble, yet prolonged wailing is the first sound that greets Louis Draycott's ears as he reaches the door of the lodge; and for this pitiful sound, George feels called upon to apologise.

"It's t' little wench, sir," he says, in a curdling whisper that is supposed to be peculiarly fitting for the solemnity of the

occasion, "hoo's takin' on dreadful, hoo is; and it worrits father most perticler. I'm afeerd, sir, as the worrit on't will hold him back from going off comfor'ble, and bein' all as we could wish."

The clamorous desolation of the child touches the heart of the man whose desolation is silent.

"Poor little one!" he says, pityingly; and then passes through the outer room to that inner chamber which is already invested with the wonderful dignity and grandeur that ever attend upon the presence of the King of Terror, no matter how plain and unpretending the appointments of the room wherein his dread presence is found.

"Peace be to this house and to all that dwell in it."

The voice that utters the beautiful words of holy greeting is low, clear, and steady. There are times when the Christian priest has to rise superior to all the circumstances of his own life or sorrow. He is Heaven's—not his own—in the day when he is called upon to minister to the sick and dying. He must carry the light that has been given to him; he must guide the feet that stumble upon the confines of the dark valley. No tears must blind him; no weakness make his step falter.

As a mother's hand, laid upon a troubled child, soothes it to quietness and peace, so has the call of duty braced and steadied the nerves of the man whose bitter vigil has been kept through the long hours of the sleepless night.

Presently the anguish will rise in its might once more; but for the moment it is in abeyance, overpowered by a need still mightier than itself.

The old man lies back upon his pillow, a noble venerable figure in death, as he had been in life. Upon the brow, from which the lint-white locks fall back straying over the pillow, stands the cold sweat of exhaustion. The lips show livid through the long, grey beard. The muscles round the mouth begin to relax, and the jaw falls when weakness drops into heavy sleep. As it is dropping now while Louis Draycott stands a moment by the bed, and then kneels, covering his face with his hands.

Tottie—stretched upon the coverlet, a dreadful little heap of misery—stops her sobs, awed into silence. Joseph Stubbs, whose bright eyes shine like palest emeralds from out the corner by the wall, lifts his tawny head and gives a feeble cry. He knows that something is wrong with the master he loves, and fancies help may

have arrived in the person of the newcomer.

The yellow glow in the east, that was but as the span of a man's hand, has widened and deepened, and covered all the sky. Its amber sheen falls through the small, high window of the room, upon the face of the dying man, as though Heaven itself were whispering a benediction.

The sunken eyes beneath the shaggy brows uncloze, and look into the kindly face bending above them.

"I'm glad yo' be come, sir," says David; and, as he speaks, finds his vein-netted, trembling hand in the strong clasp of the other. "I bided, and bided, and bided—for I didna' like to have yun sleep broke—until I couldna' bide no longer. I'd like for yo' to say a bit of a prayer for me and for her, sir—for t' little wench—for hoo's gradely troubled is Tottie."

At this the child, creeping nearer to him, breaks once more into weeping; and Joseph Stubbs stretches one furry paw out from his lair on to Tottie's shaking shoulder, as who should say: "I'm only a cat, I know; but I do feel for you. Please don't forget I'm one of the family."

We stand on holy ground. The simple room has become a sanctuary. The light that shines through the barred window might well be the gleam of a hundred altar-lights.

Tears course down the cheeks of George as he stands with bowed head, and hands clasped upon his breast. He has forgotten all about wishing his father would "make a good end." He has forgotten all save that the old man lying there gave him life, and is now fast drifting away out unto "that unknown sea that rolls round all the world."

Not a sound breaks the stillness of the room save the voice that pleads with Heaven for God's peace and comfort upon the soul of the dying man; a prayer so simple and so plain that even Tottie understands every word of it, and says Amen with the rest.

David is so still, so like some fine recumbent figure carved in stone, that the Chaplain is uncertain if words can pierce into that shadowland where the old man's spirit seems to dwell; but, at the sound of the sweet, familiar "Our Father," the eyelids quiver, the lips move, the prayer of prayers is followed word by word. It is like the appeal of some old melody, known and loved from childhood. It strikes a

chord in heart and memory that vibrates to the touch. Ofttimes have I seen and noted this by many and many a death-bed; seen the quiver in the dying face; seen the white lips move; known that that cry to the Father is never uttered in vain, however thick the mist may be gathering about the soul which nears the confines of the dark valley.

Louis Draycott is about to rise from his knees. Tottie has let a pent-up sob or two escape; George is turning to leave the room, in answer to a summons at the gate. For a moment he does not notice a strange change that comes over his father. But Tottie sees it, and clings to the pillow in a sort of frenzy of love and fear; the while the Chaplain cannot rise from his knees, because David's long, thin, sinewy hand is laid upon his shoulder—laid so heavily that it trembles with the pressure. The sunken eyes are widely open, and shine with a wondrous light; a faint flush has mounted to the worn cheek; the pallid mouth quivers.

"What ails thee? Has some sore trouble come upon thee? What's come over thee, that's bin so good—so good to me? Tell me, for God A'mighty's sake?"

The voice is hoarse and strange, but each word seems to ring through the quiet room—each word seems as a fresh stab of pain to the man to whom it is addressed.

Who can cheat the dying? Of what avail is it to reel off the glib lie—to put forward the mean, pitiful subterfuge to those whose nearness to the land where all things are made plain has already given them the keen and perfect intuition which sees, and knows, and pierces even to the very marrow of the bones?

The nearer heaven, the clearer the light. When one beloved is longed for, and the sands are running low, some one may say: "He will not come; he is hindered. You must bear it as you may. You must die with this bitter heart-hunger unsatisfied." The eyes that so soon shall close upon all earthly things, to open in a world where misunderstanding and treachery can naught avail, will look up into the faces round the bed, full of a strange, unearthly light; the lips that shall so soon be shrouded for ever from your sight will whisper faintly, yet clearly, too: "It is no use to tell me these things. They are lies, lies, lies, I know. He would have come to me if he could. He has been kept away."

So with David. In this supreme hour, knowledge is given to him. He reads, like an open book, the face of the man who still kneels beside him.

"What's come over thee? What's troubling thee?" he says, his voice breaking and quivering, his hand clutching more and more agitatedly at the shoulder it rests on.

Tottie gazes earnestly at the dark face that stirs and quivers just ever so little as the old man speaks. The question so earnestly put by those dying lips is like the probing of a wound.

"A great trouble has come upon me, David; pray for me, old friend, as I for you."

And then the poor, trembling hands are clasped, and the eyes, from which the strange light has died out, are raised to Heaven, while, in that moment of weakness and helplessness, the voice which would fain utter words of supplication falls to a feeble, gasping sound, and ends in the awful rattling breath that is the immediate precursor of death. The grand old head droops; the hands fall apart.

George hurries to the bedside. Tottie cries aloud, burying her face in the pillow.

Surely, upon the wings of that wordless prayer, the spirit that breathed it has passed to the land that lies beyond our ken!

But no; one utterance still is given, for, as the Chaplain bends closely down, he catches some faltering words:

"I'm glad—as He knows—about t' little wench—"

Then all is still.

"Into Thy hands, O loving Saviour, we commend the soul of Thy servant."

Who, to hear the calm, clear voice that utters these words, could realise that the heart of the man who thus speaks is well-nigh breaking? Yet what a passionately-pathetic undercurrent of thought is running through his mind! With what a sad radiancy does the memory of one hour passed in that simple room, that is now the temple of death, rise before him! He looks at the form—tall, gaunt, majestic in its perfect rest, and recalls the kindly smile, the hand holding Mazie's, the blessing given and returned; Aunt Dacie in the tall, carved chair by the fireplace; her gentle wonder at Mazie's earnest words and ways; the talk about the pictures on the wall, that now seem to have a pathos of their own; the tawny cat rubbing its soft head against Mazie's arm. . . .

How far, how far away in the past do these things lie? Was it but so short a while ago, or is it "a thousand years" since his darling turned to look upon the dark prison walls and told him how dear she held his work, for his sake, and for the sake of the sorrow and the sin gathered in that gloomy pile? How high had been his hopes; how dazed he had been with the joy of it all! How had he walked through enchanted streets—lived in a fairy world!

And now, in some strange way, the still, recumbent figure on the bed seemed to symbolise his own dead hopes.

Another moment, and he has cast aside these thoughts, and is bending over and raising Tottie from the bed, where she lies prone, a little heap of sobs, and has set her on his knee.

All her tangle of curls falls against his shoulder. She throws her little arms about his neck, and, with an exceeding bitter cry, bemoans her dead.

"Oh, gran'dad—gran'dad! What will I do without you, dear!"

It is useless for any of us to try and comfort such sorrow in its first moments of bitterness. The loving kiss, the tender presence may be borne; but words are worse than wasted.

Louis Draycott, holding the child gently in his arms, carries her into the adjoining room; while George breaks in with many an asseveration of how he had always said "The little wench would take on dreadful after father;" and Joseph Stubbs, coming stealthily forth from his hiding-place, rubs his arched back up against Tottie's legs, and makes a low, purring noise, striving—according to his lights—to comfort her.

"Give her to me, sir," says a kindly voice, presently; and Bessy, looking rather tossed and tumbled, and very pale in the face, holds out her arms for the little one. Bobby—in the disgracefully inadequate attire of one long, white nightgown—follows on, gravely contemplating the scene, and, according to his wont, saying his say with the rest.

"Her be's c'yin' and c'yin'," he says, pointing to Tottie, who is clinging about his mother. "Bobby is sorry—and so is 'Tubbs."

Thus surrounded by comforters, Louis Draycott leaves the child, and walks, slowly and wearily enough, now the strain is over, up the steps and along the corridor to his rooms.

The sunshine glares in through the skylights overhead. A canary, kept by one of the warders, and much thought of by every one, seems ready to split its little yellow throat by trying how loud it can sing.

How cruelly the sunshine, and the flowers, and the singing of birds mock us when the heart within us is like lead, and our feet drag for very heaviness!

Well has the sweet singer of the North said:

How can ye chant, ye little birds,  
And I see weary, full of care!

The shrill jubilant song of the prison canary seems to hurt in the hearing. As Louis Draycott passes on to his rooms, it seems an echo from a world in which he has no longer any part—a world of joy that lies somewhere very far away, and that his feet may never enter more.

As he crosses the threshold of the room, a figure, seen in dark relief against the sun-flooded window, turns, meets him, greets him, with a close, tense grasp of outstretched hands, and in a silence that comes from lack of power to speak.

"Dumphie—you here, at this hour?"

As the grasp of those kind hands uncloses, Louis Draycott drops into the low lounge chair by the empty grate; his breath comes short and sharp; the sweat-beads start upon his brow.

Dumphie, pale, speechless with sorrow, takes the guise of yet another spectre from the dear dead past. It is almost too much to meet him thus so unexpectedly—too sudden a strain upon the wrung sinews of the mind.

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